

STARS AND STRIPES

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

Congress orders study of military absentee voting

BY WARD SANDERSON
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — By congressional order, the Defense Department's Inspector General is quietly gauging the effectiveness of absentee voting practices at military bases overseas.

Though the office examined overseas voting last year, the new study marks the first time a survey has been required by law. The plan is a result of Congress's resolve to avoid balloting brouhaha of the type the nation endured during the last presidential election.

"This is the first year the report has been done under law," said Steven Anthony, a spokesman at IG headquarters in Arlington, Va. "We did a report at the request of the secretary of defense immediately following the elections in 2000."

On Friday, a team wound up a week of sessions with more than 100 sailors, officers and family members stationed in Naples. The sessions were closed to reporters and even to base authorities who weren't participants.

"They are being very secretive," acknowledged Peter Katson, who works as the Navy's IG liaison in Naples. Katson said the base was merely asked to aid the IG in setting up the sessions, which included about 20 panelists at a time.

"They wanted a representative cross section of all the personnel assigned to this location," Katson said.

Senior Chief Petty Officer James Slater, base spokesman, said government civilian employees were not included in the discussions.

Anthony said the plan is global and just beginning and

sites will include ships. Anthony declined, however, to give specifics on the length of the study or the bases that would be included. The Defense Authorization Act for 2002, which ordered the canvassing, specified that visits would be unannounced.

The IG will not discuss its findings so far, but will wait until its final report is finished. Katson said the reason for the hush is not secrecy for its own sake, but rather a desire to keep the final report from being compromised or influenced.

Anthony said that, in the end, the report may not even peg any problems.

Last year's Defense-ordered study included a total of 1,267 people, one-third of whom said they were confused about the absentee voting process. As a result, the IG recommended

the military improve oversight of its voting programs, make them more consistent across the Defense Department and to educate its voters. The study also asked the military to work with individual states to standardize overseas voting processes and technology, and asked the military to draw up rules for voting assistance officers for ships, submarines and remote units.

Overseas ballots became a partisan issue in the Florida ballot-counting standoff between George W. Bush and Al Gore two years ago. The House Armed Services Committee was, in the words of its own report, "deeply disappointed that military absentee voters were not offered consistently high quality voting information and assistance during the 2000 election."

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Hope fades as death toll in Italy earthquake rises to 29

BY PETER W. MAYER
The Associated Press

SAN GIULIANO DI PUGLIA, Italy — The earthquake that toppled a school in this tiny Italian mountain village killed the entire first-grade class. Hopes that more survivors might be found in the rubble faded Friday as the total death toll climbed to 29.

Emergency crews grimly sifted through the debris of Thursday's quake, using cranes, sledgehammers, blowtorches and their bare hands. As they worked, the south-central Molise region was jolted by several aftershocks, including one with a preliminary magnitude of 5.3 — nearly as powerful as the 5.4 quake that destroyed the school, officials said.

The new quakes caused at least three injuries and sent panicked residents into the streets, where many were treated for shock. It was not clear if any buildings



AP

Rescuers remove the body of a teacher from the rubble after a quake hit San Giuliano Di Puglia, Italy, on Friday.

were damaged. As a precaution, authorities ordered all remaining residents of the town to evacuate, state TV reported.

Just before dawn, a 9-year-old boy named Angelo was rescued from the school, police said, the last survivor of Thursday's quake.

Rescuers pulled several more bodies out later Friday, including two they mistakenly believed were alive.

Fire Chief Mario Morcone said the final death toll was 29, including 26 children and one teacher in the school and two elderly women who were killed when their homes collapsed.

A rescue worker said most of the older children were crushed at their desks as the roof crashed down upon them.

The quake struck the Campobasso area, 50 miles northeast of Naples, at 11:33 a.m. on Thursday. San Giuliano di Puglia, a village of 1,195 people, was hardest hit.

There were 56 pupils, four teachers and two janitors in the school at the time, officials said. Some of the children were gathered in the garden to celebrate Halloween.

A little girl named Lilia told Italian television from her hospital bed that the children were drawing pictures of Pinocchio and getting ready for their Halloween party when the quake struck.

Japan appeals order

Japan's government has appealed an Oct. 16 Yokohama District Court ruling that it pay 2.74 billion yen, or \$23 million, to residents living near Atsugi Naval Air Facility.

In an appeal filed Tuesday, the government protested the lower allowable noise limits the Yokohama court ordered. It also objected to the Yokohama court's ruling that people who moved near the air base recently — and who therefore should have known of the noise levels — be included in the award.

Eleven residents excluded from the court-ordered payment also appealed. The court had ruled they didn't qualify for compensation because they live in a semi-industrial area.

Other Atsugi-area residents plan to ask the government to withdraw the appeal to the Tokyo High Court.

Command change

SEOUL — Lt. Gen. Oh Hyun-gu took command of the Combined Aviation Force on Monday during a change-of-command ceremony at Incheon Base.

Oh replaces Lt. Gen. Kim Hee-joong, who retired.

Oh's wartime mission is to lead U.S. and South Korean aviation forces under the combined command, assisted by his deputy, Col. Ann F. Macdonald, 17th Aviation Brigade commander.

Macdonald brought a 60-soldier formation to the ceremony to pay respect to Kim and welcome Oh, said brigade officials.

Dance festival begins

SEOUL — The 12th annual Korea-Japan Dance Festival will be held at Theater Zero, near Hongik University, from Saturday to Wednesday.

The festival features dancers from the two nations, and performances start at 7:30 p.m. nightly.

Tickets are 15,000 won (about \$12.50). For more information, Korean speakers can call the theater at 338-9240.

From staff reports

S. Korea finalizes U.S. land-return plan

BY FRANKLIN FISHER

Stars and Stripes

South Korea's national legislature Wednesday approved a landmark accord in which the U.S. military will shrink the space it occupies in South Korea by more than half.

The United States will hand back thousands of acres of land and close many installations under the accord, called the Land Partnership Plan (LPP).

It runs through 2011.

It calls for no cuts in U.S. troop strength in South Korea, which stands at 37,000.

The National Assembly's ratification vote clears the way for far-reaching changes for the U.S. military presence in South Korea and for the Asian country's economic development.

In March, representatives of South Korea's Ministry of National Defense and U.S. Forces Korea signed the LPP agreement. But the legislature's ratification gives the LPP the legal status of an international agreement.

"It was not final until ratified," said Robert T. Mounts, special assistant for international relations, United States SOFA secretary, in Seoul.

"It allows us to begin implementing the agreement and provides a broad basis of political and legal support for the agreement," Mounts said.

"It will take 10 years of fairly intense project management to ensure that it's implemented according to its terms," he said.

Said Army Col. Daniel Wilson, USFK's chief engineer: "As I like to tell everybody, what's next is the hard part; the easy part is past us."

Both sides will have to work out an updated timeta-

ble and procedures for carrying out the plan, said Wilson.

"Then, internally, we've got a lot of master planning efforts going on that will translate this agreement, this plan, into a concrete action plan on the ground," he said.

The plan calls for the number of major U.S. installations to drop from 41 to 23. To accomplish this, the military will close or partially close some sites, while enlarging or creating other installations. The United States has 95 sites in South Korea.

About 32,000 acres of land valued at \$1.3 billion will return to South Korea, reducing the U.S. military's "footprint" on the peninsula by more than 50 percent.

South Korea, in turn, is to give the U.S. military about 1,270 acres to create additional room for the troops and equipment that would move to the remaining installations.

No site will be closed or land returned until new land and facilities are ready for occupancy by U.S. forces.

The United States expects to invest \$1.1 billion over the life of the plan to improve living and working conditions on its remaining installations.

"LPP will greatly benefit the ROK economy because there is a significant amount of land being returned that can potentially be used for commercial development," USFK said in a written statement that quoted Army Gen. Leon J. LaPorte, commander of U.S. forces in South Korea.

It's also expected to yield economic gains and job opportunities through construction in areas USFK will return to South Korea, and on installations where U.S. forces will move under consolidation, the statement said.

"The consolidation of our installations will also result in

less congestion, pollution and traffic in many communities throughout Korea," LaPorte was quoted as saying, "and should also reduce the chances of military vehicles being involved in traffic accidents."

The plan also opens the way for what the U.S. military says will be improved training, and more-effective command and control of U.S. forces.

The LPP permits joint U.S. use of 36 South Korean training ranges, many of which it already uses. And it frees the United States to set up safety zones around parts of installations where explosives or other military activities might pose hazards.

"We think the agreement is very much valuable to us in several respects," said Kim Chang-boem of the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Some installations are in the heart of urban centers. Some in the South Korean public have come to view those sites as a barrier to further urban development.

Those include Camp Hialeah in Pusan, a part of Camp Walker in Taegu, Camp Page in Chunchon and Camp Market in Incheon, Kim said.

Given the cities' rapid growth, Kim said, they've come to view the bases as impeding the "urban redevelopment which the local communities anxiously looked forward to."

Relocating or closing those in-city bases would help ease those cities' long-standing complaints about the U.S. military, Kim said.

"And," he added, it also hopefully would "help lessen the potential tension between the neighboring community and the USFK bases."

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U.S. preparing new Iraq resolution

BY BARRY SCHWEID

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.N. action on Iraq will be delayed beyond next week's U.S. midterm elections as the Bush administration, in a bid for French and Russian support, revises its resolution calling for new weapons inspections.

A senior U.S. official said Thursday that the changes would reflect the views of Russia and France without altering the tough provisions demanded by the United States and Britain.

These include declaring Iraq in "material breach" of its obligations under previous U.N. resolutions that ordered Baghdad to destroy its weapons of mass destruction and warning President Saddam Hussein that if he fails to get rid of such weapons, Iraq would suffer "serious consequences" — a diplomatic way of threatening war.

President Bush leveled the threat again Friday as he campaigned for Republican candidates in Harrisburg, Pa.

Varying a now-familiar speech slightly, Bush called Saddam a threat to America and said the United Nations risked becoming nothing more than a "debating society" if it failed to get tough with Iraq.

Russia and France object to threatening Iraq and want to defer U.N. action until international inspectors return to Iraq after a lapse of four years.

Secretary of State Colin Powell discussed the U.S. strategy by telephone with Foreign Ministers Igor Ivanov of Russia and Dominique de Villepin of France.

On Friday, Russia's Interfax news agency quoted Ivanov as saying the members of the U.N. Security Council have made significant progress on a resolution.

"In the last few days, we have succeeded in bringing the approaches of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council ... closer," Ivanov said.

Russia, however, still insists the draft resolution gives no one the right to use force, Ivanov said.

Revising the resolution could take a day or two, after which diplomats who have been negotiating at the United Nations for seven weeks would consult their capitals, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

That means consideration of a resolution would spill over into next week, with a vote probably not until midweek or even later, the official said.

The political effect would be that President Bush will be able to hold back on announcing whether he intends to go to war with Iraq — a potentially explosive issue — until after Tuesday's congressional and gubernatorial elections.

Air Force sends B-2 shelters to England

BY ROBERT BURNS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Air Force has quietly dispatched special climate-controlled shelters for B-2 stealth bombers to air bases in England and the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, Air Force officials said Thursday.

It is widely expected that if President Bush decides to use military force to disarm Iraq's Saddam Hussein, B-2 bombers will feature prominently in the air campaign.

They could operate from their home base in Missouri, but the Air Force would prefer they fly from "forward operating locations" — Diego Garcia and England's Royal Air Force base at Fairford. They also could operate from the Pacific island of Guam.

Although B-2s, which cost \$2 billion apiece, flew combat missions in the 1999 Kosovo air war and in the early weeks of the Afghanistan war last fall, they have never operated from an overseas base, other than in training exercises.

The reason they have operated exclusively from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., is that maintenance work on the special coatings and fabric that give the B-2 its radar-evading capability must be done in a controlled climate.

New aluminum-trussed shelters manufactured by American Spaceframes Fabricators Inc., of Crystal River, Fla., were recently delivered to the Air Force and then dispatched to Diego Garcia and Fairford in anticipation of possible B-2 deployments in Iraq. All the B-2s are still at Whiteman.

The shipment of the shelters was not announced by the Air Force but was mentioned in a fact sheet that officials provided to reporters who visited Whiteman Air Force Base on Wednesday.

Officials declined to discuss it, apparently because of sensitivities over moves that suggest preparation for a war against Iraq.

U.S. officials had said weeks ago that they were in discussions with the British government over deploying B-2 shelters to Diego Garcia and Fairford, but it was not clear when the shelters would be erected there.

All 21 B-2s in the Air Force fleet are in the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman.

The Air Force has five B-2 shelters. Four are at Diego Garcia and one is at Fairford. They cost \$2.5 million piece.

The shelters are 250 feet wide, 126 feet long and 55 feet high with an interior volume of 1.1 million cubic feet. They are designed to withstand a 110 mph wind and a snow burden of 40 pounds per square inch.

Iraq: Attackers will be 'sent to hell'

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Saddam Hussein's deputy warned Americans on Friday they would be "sent to hell" if they attack Iraq.

Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan also called on the U.N. Security Council to prevent the United States from pushing through a tougher resolution about Iraq's weapons programs, seen by critics as an automatic green light to attack.

"The aggressors will be sent to hell if they attack Iraq," Ramadan told reporters.

He called on Russia, China and France, all three veto-holding Security Council members, to reject the U.S.-sponsored draft resolution that threatens Iraq with "serious consequences" if it does not allow U.N. weapons inspectors unhindered work when they return to Iraq.

"There is no need for a new resolution," Ramadan said.

The United States does not want the inspectors to return, Ramadan said.

Instead, "it wants either that Iraq refuses the formula proposed by the U.S. administration so it can say that Iraq is not complying with U.N. resolutions, or that the inspectors come with obstacles that prevent them from performing their job properly," he said.

The Bush administration wants the Council to support a resolution that strengthens inspections, warns Iraq of "serious consequences" if it fails to cooperate, and declares that Iraq is still in "material breach" of its obligations to get rid of its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs.

The administration said it was working on a new version of its resolution, but it wasn't clear whether it would address Russian, French and Chinese opposition to language they believe could trigger U.S. military action against Baghdad.

Bases take fire

KHOST, Afghanistan — Rockets were fired at U.S. Army bases in eastern Afghanistan early Friday, startling soldiers but causing no injuries.

Two 107 mm rockets exploded at about 4 a.m. within 500 yards of Camp Salerno, a U.S. base near the city of Khost. Another exploded 10 minutes later near Chapman Airfield, a few miles away, said Army spokesman Sgt. Sam McLarty.

Troops found the launch site between the two bases about a half-mile south of Salerno. They found a small, sealed leather pouch, possibly an amulet, and a sheet of paper with some writing on it, McLarty said. Translators were analyzing the writing.

About 36 miles east of Khost, in Gardez, three rockets exploded just after midnight about a mile southwest of a compound housing U.S. special forces soldiers, U.S. military spokesman Col. Roger King said at Bagram Air Base.

U.S. bases are attacked several times a week. They rarely hit their targets.

On Thursday, paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division found three rockets pointing at the Americans' forward operating base in Khost, King said.

Rebel officer arrested

MANILA, Philippines — A ranking officer of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front has been arrested in the southern Philippines while allegedly carrying a bomb as he tried to pass through a military checkpoint, an army spokesman said Friday.

Solaiman Esmail, also known as Abu Hashim, was arrested Monday in North Cotabato province's Alamada town, said Maj. Julieto Ando, an army spokesman. He has been charged with illegal possession of explosives and jailed in the provincial capital of Kidapawan. The arrest was not announced until Friday.

Ando said Esmail had been carrying a 60 mm mortar round, a blasting cap, a timing device and a 9-volt battery.

From The Associated Press

Bali investigators zero in on Libya, Afghanistan links

BY MICHAEL CASEY

The Associated Press

BALI, Indonesia — Indonesians who trained as Islamic guerrillas in Libya and fought in Afghanistan might have committed the Oct. 12 Bali nightclub bombings that killed nearly 200 people, mostly foreign tourists, the chief investigator in the case said Friday.

Meanwhile, the manhunt for the bombers moved to the neighboring island of Java after police raided a house and discovered a photograph matching a composite sketch of one of three suspects.

Relatives of one fugitive had been questioned and officers were searching for him in Malang, East Java, a province separated from Bali to the west by a narrow strait, a police spokesman Sad Harunantyo told private radio El-Shinta.

In Canberra on Friday, Australian police added weight to a possible Java connection

when they announced that the main blast, which destroyed the packed Sari Club, was by explosive chlorate set off by a "booster charge," such as TNT. More than 880 pounds of chlorate were stolen on Java, Indonesia's main island, in September, they said.

Police Maj. Gen. I Made Pastika, who is leading the Indonesian investigation, said his team were now following 10 strong leads.

"This must have been committed by professionals who had planned well and were well organized. I think they are Indonesians," Pastika told The Associated Press.

Indonesian Defense Minister Matori Abdul Jalil has accused the al-Qaida terror network of involvement, while neighboring Australia and other countries have identified Jemaah Islamiyah, an al-Qaida-linked organization, as the likely culprit.

Australian police also said Friday that the bombers had demonstrated a "high degree

of expertise" and had aimed to maximize casualties. The majority of the dead and wounded were Australian vacationers.

Indonesian police released sketches of the trio this week and said they had identified one of them. Police said there is no evidence yet that the three had masterminded the attack and it was possible they might have been low-level operatives.

U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Ralph Boyce, in Bali to survey and lay a wreath at the bomb site, said Friday that Washington would provide assistance for both the investigation and reconstruction efforts.

About 120 Australian police and intelligence officers are working in Bali with detectives from Indonesia, the United States, Britain, Japan and other countries.

Boyce was scheduled on Friday to hold talks with Bali's governor, Indonesian investigators and blast victims at the main hospital.

FBI plays integral role in terror war

The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — As the fighting winds down in Afghanistan, the focus of the war against terrorism is shifting from the battlefield to a shadowy world where wiretaps, informants, surveillance and forensic evidence have replaced bombs and bullets.

With those changes, the FBI is taking a leading role in the war, bringing high-tech investigative techniques to the search for terrorists far from America's shores.

The work can be tedious: sifting through the wreckage of a car bomb in Karachi, screening records of Middle East students at Asian flight schools, persuading local police to follow someone suspect-

ed of terrorist links or tracking leads that don't pan out.

FBI agents in Jordan have also joined the hunt for the killers of American diplomat Laurence Foley, who was gunned down Monday in front of his Amman home.

"Given the globalization of crime and terrorism, there is no way for the FBI to be effective without agents on the ground outside the United States," said Alfred Finch, a former FBI special agent who was assigned in Egypt in the 1990s.

The effort has paid off in some of the biggest coups of the anti-terrorism conflict — including the capture last March of al-Qaida's No. 3 official, Abu Zubaydah, and the arrest six months later of Ramzi

Binalshibh, one of the masterminds of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Both were arrested in Pakistan during joint operations by FBI and Pakistani security agents.

FBI operations, most of which take place in secret, have not been entirely seamless. Local authorities sometimes grumble about tactics and attitudes.

"Some rattle off orders and get disappointed if nobody moves," said a Filipino police official on condition of anonymity.

Still, many local authorities acknowledge that the FBI provides a level of technical expertise that few countries can match.

Some of the biggest payoffs have come in the fight against global terrorism.

Killer wants testimony to aid teacher's widow

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — A teenager who shot and killed his teacher two years ago appeared in court Thursday and refused to answer questions in a lawsuit the teacher's widow filed against the gun's manufacturer.

His attorney, Robert Udell, said Nathaniel Brazill only wanted to testify if it would help the case of Pam Grunow, whose husband, Barry, was killed in a hallway at Lake Worth Middle School.

A somber Brazill, now 15 months into his 28-year prison sentence, only shook his head "yes" and "no" to answer questions.

He nodded to invoke the Fifth Amendment, so nothing he said could be used against him as he appeals his second-degree murder conviction.

Jurors were secluded during his brief testimony and will instead see parts of his criminal trial testimony on videotape next week.

Grunow is suing the distributor for designing the gun without a lock, but with a small size and cheap construction that make it look like a toy.

Attorneys for gun distributor Valor Corp. maintain the fault lies with Brazill, for pointing the gun at Barry Grunow and pulling the trigger.

Statute of limitations sought on priest abuse

CHICAGO — A joint commission of U.S. bishops and senior Vatican officials has decided to re-impose a 10-year statute of limitations on the Roman Catholic Church's internal disciplining of American priests accused of sexually abusing children, Cardinal Francis George said Thursday.

The decision appears to be a retreat by the American bishops from a key part of the zero tolerance policy adopted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops four months ago in Dallas in response to the nationwide scandal over priestly sexual abuse. That policy called for the permanent removal from ministry of any Catholic clergyman who has ever sexually abused a minor, no matter how long ago.

In addition, the joint commission tightened the definition of sexual abuse in the Dallas policy and decided that accused priests could not be permanently removed from ministerial duties unless they are convicted by a church tribunal, George said.

The revisions to the Dallas policy will be presented to the full body of U.S. bishops at a Nov. 11-14 meeting in Washington. If accepted, the revised policy would be resubmitted to the Vatican for final approval and would then become binding on every diocese in the United States.

The joint commission was appointed last week to revise the Dallas policy after the Vatican ruled that it contained "vague" language and conflicted with the church's "universal" laws. Among those world-wide laws is a requirement that allegations of sexual abuse by priests must be brought within 10 years of the victim's 18th birthday.

Ruling on injured infant

ORANGE, Calif. — A judge Thursday ordered life support measures other than nutrition and water discontinued for a 1-year-old boy who has been in a comatose state since he was allegedly beaten by his father more than 10 months ago.

Judge Richard E. Behn stayed the ruling pending a possible appeal by the father, Moises Ibarra, 24, who could face murder charges if the boy dies. He has been jailed on felony child abuse charges since allegedly beating his son Dec. 17.

Barring a successful appeal, Christopher would be removed from the ventilator that is breathing for him. Doctors are divided about what would happen next: Some think the boy would die almost immediately, while others think he would continue breathing for some time.

Sniper case grows again

BY MELINDA DESLATTÉ

The Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — Two sniper suspects are now charged with a monthlong series of killings from the Gulf Coast to the suburbs of the nation's capital.

Louisiana officials said Thursday that ballistic tests had linked John Allen Muhammad, 41, and John Lee Malvo, 17, to the Sept. 23 murder of a beauty shop worker — the second state to file murder charges after re-examining a local shooting for possible links to the Washington-area attacks.

Muhammad and Malvo were also accused of an Alabama murder two days before the Louisiana shooting.

The two suspects face multiple state and federal counts in the Alabama and Louisiana cases and in the sniper spree that left 10 people dead and three others wounded in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. They are also suspects in a February killing in Washington state.

ABC News on Thursday aired a tape of a telephone call made to authorities during the spree that it said was believed to be from Malvo. In the tape, the caller hangs up after being told by a Rockville, Md., police dispatcher to call the task force investigating the shootings.

"Good morning. Don't say anything, just listen," the caller said. "We are the people that are causing the killing in your area. Look on the tarot card. It says, 'Call me God.' Do not release the threat."

"We have called you three times before trying to set up negotiations," the caller continued. "We've gotten no response. People have died."

Neil Greenberger, spokesman for the city of Rockville, said the tape sounds like the call received by a police dispatcher Oct. 15. Greenberger said police gave the tape to the sniper task force, but he did not know if investigators were able to trace it.

In Baton Rouge, Police Chief Pat Engle issued first-degree murder warrants for Muhammad and Malvo after

ballistics tests matched the rifle used in the sniper shootings to the shooting of Hong Im Ballenger, 45.

Ballenger died from a single shot to the head as she left the Beauty Depot. Witnesses said the gunman was a young black man who fled into a nearby park and evaded bloodhounds called in to track him down.

According to the arrest warrant, police believe Muhammad shot the woman and Malvo stole her purse.

Jim Ballenger, the victim's husband, said his wife was a native of South Korea and the two were married there when he was in the military. The couple moved to Baton Rouge in 1996 with their three sons.

Earlier on Thursday, Alabama authorities said the same rifle used in Ballenger's killing, a .223-caliber Bushmaster, had been linked to the shooting death of a liquor store worker in Montgomery on Sept. 21, two days before the Louisiana slaying and 315 miles away.

The sniper suspects have been in custody in Maryland since they were captured at a highway rest stop Oct. 24.

Citing Justice Department officials, The Washington Post reported Friday that in the hours after his capture, Muhammad denied he owned the car he and Malvo were found in or the Bushmaster rifle inside it.

In Washington, Attorney General John Ashcroft said the investigation was continuing into the possibility other people may be involved or that the suspects may have committed more crimes.

In Alabama, officials said ballistics evidence had linked the rifle to Claudine Parker, 52, who was shot to death during an attack that also wounded her liquor store co-worker, Kellie Adams, 24.

State forensics director Taylor Noggle said the slug taken from Parker's body matched bullets test-fired from the Bushmaster.

Muhammad and Malvo have been charged with capital murder in the crime.

First-degree murder carries a possible death penalty in Louisiana.

Johnny Knoxville takes 'Jackass' to the big screen

BY ANTHONY BREZNICAN

The Associated Press

OUCH! The goofballs of MTV's insane stunt show "Jackass" have taken their masochistic sh-tick to the movies, complete with skull injuries, embarrassing nudity and pain — lots and lots of pain.

For these guys, jumping out of a tree wearing underwear attached to bungee cords is more than a way to get an eyeball-popping wedgie — it's a dismissal of anyone who ever scolded someone to "Behave!"

Jackass-in-chief Johnny Knoxville says the goal of his kamikaze comedy is to make people laugh, and he has no message besides, "Don't try this at home."

After inflaming critics with the crude concept, Knoxville quit the MTV show last year after less than a year on the air because he thought the joke had run its course. "Jackass: The Movie" is his encore — a way to celebrate his contribution to the retreating boundaries of taste.

Knoxville, whose real name is P.J. Clapp, started the "Jackass" phenomenon while testing safety equipment for a column in a skateboarding magazine, and says it's just an ex-

treme form of slapstick. Asked why it caught on, he says he doesn't want to "suck all the fun out of it by pontificating."

"It's always funny to see somebody get broke," he explains. "There's nothing funnier than an untalented stuntman, in my opinion."

Comic bits in "Jackass: The Movie" range from lamebrain silliness (running around naked in public) to "Candid Camera"-style pranks (renting a car and demolishing it in a crash-up derby) to injuries (falling off a skateboard on concrete steps) and gross-out antics (urinating on a snow cone).

Other scenes include sidekick Steve-O running through a pit of crocodiles in his standard G-string outfit, Knoxville on roller-skates with bottle rockets on the sides, and a performer who defecates in a plumbing store's showroom toilet.

The film is rated R for "dangerous, sometimes extremely crude stunts, language and nudity," according to the Motion Picture Association of America.

The TV show — which still airs in late-night reruns — drew criticism that it encouraged dangerous behavior. After Knoxville wore a fireproof suit and allowed himself to be set ablaze and "roasted" on a grill, a few imitators were

severely burned when they defied the show's disclaimers and performed their own variations on the stunt.

A 15-year-old in New Hampshire told investigators that he was inspired by "Jackass" to ignite lamp oil on a 12-year-old friend, who suffered second-degree burns over 30 percent of his body.

Knoxville says he feels horrible when he hears stories like that.

"I just wish parents would take a little more time to see what their kids are watching and see what their kids are doing," he says.

His 6-year-old daughter, Madison, is forbidden from watching all but the tamest "Jackass" pranks, Knoxville says.

"Jackass" co-creator and director Jeff Tremaine, who edited Knoxville's skateboard columns, said the TV show "just stopped being fun, with all the bad hype we were getting. Anything bad that would happen, we'd get the blame for it."

After quitting, Knoxville went on to act in the movies "Men in Black II" and "Deuces Wild."

Recently, "Jackass" has faced some legal trouble.

A woman sued MTV last week claiming her knees and spine were injured when "Jackass" prankster Dave England crashed into a lectern

that knocked her to the floor during an unused promotional stunt in April. Wendy Linden is suing for unspecified damages. MTV declined to comment.

Steve-O — real name Stephen Glover — was charged in August with violating Louisiana obscenity laws in a stage appearance in which he stapled his scrotum to his thigh. He was also charged with second-degree battery for taking part in a stunt in which a bouncer knocked a 19-year-old unconscious.

Glover, free on \$1.12 million bail, was unavailable for an interview.

So what's so appealing about self-inflicted suffering? It may be that the macho stunts on "Jackass" strike a chord with some viewers at a time when cultural changes have diluted traditional ideas of masculinity, says David Savran, a theater professor at The City University of New York and author of the 1998 book "Taking It Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture."

"The humiliation proves you're a man, proves you're tough," he says.

"What's most interesting to me, though, is that it's all in play, it's a kind of big practical joke," Savran adds. "Plus, so many people now are so hungry after celebrity that they will do almost anything to get on TV."

Singer hanging tough

A terminally ill Warren Zevon joked to David Letterman that his diagnosis "means you better get your dry cleaning done on special."

The singer, one of Letterman's favorite artists, made a poignant appearance on CBS' "Late Show" Wednesday, singing three songs.

Zevon, whose more than three-decades long career began with "Wanted Dead or Alive" in 1969, has been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Zevon said he had suffered from shortness of breath for several months and only saw a doctor after he confided his condition to his dentist.

"I might have made a tactical error in not going to a physician for 20 years," the 55-year-old singer said.

Faces 'n' places

Looking for a match

Deep-voiced soul singer Barry White was resting at home while his search for a kidney donor continued, his manager said.

White, 58, had dialysis treatment in September to stabilize his condition, a complication from years of chronic high blood pressure.

"I see him every day, and he's doing better every day," manager Ned Shankman said Wednesday. "He's a candidate for transplant. We're still looking for a match." Potential donors include White's own children, Shankman said.

White is known for romantic songs such as "Can't Get Enough of Your Love, Babe" and "You're the First, the Last, My Everything."

On the mend

Actor-director Kevin Costner is recuperating at his Los Angeles area home after surgery last week to remove his appendix, a spokesman said.

The surgery was described as a common appendectomy and wasn't serious. "He is recovering at his home in Los Angeles for two weeks. He has another week at home," publicist Paul Bloch said Wednesday.

Beatle mania

George Martin, who produced most of the Beatles' music, will conduct a local orchestra alongside famed Cuban composer Leo Brower during his visit to the Caribbean island this week.

Martin also will give a speech about the Beatles' music.

From The Associated Press

Sooners bracing for Colorado RB Brown

Chris Brown is running over defenders again, and that could mean trouble for No. 2 Oklahoma.

After a slow start, Brown leads the nation in rushing with 1,303 yards, and he's helped Colorado win five straight and rise to No. 13 entering Saturday's game against the undefeated Sooners.

Oklahoma may be favored by 10 points, but the Sooners haven't beaten the Buffaloes since 1988, going 0-8-1 in that span. Then again, the teams didn't play each other the past two years.

"I think it's fair to assume that we're a little bit different team right now," Sooners fourth-year coach Bob Stoops said.

Colorado (6-2, 4-0 Big 12) won the last meeting, 38-24 in 1999 — Stoops' first season in Norman.

The 6-foot-3, 220-pound Brown has been the driving force behind Colorado's rise to the top of the Big 12 North, averaging nearly 200 yards a game during the winning streak.

Ever since the Buffs went through a quarterback change earlier this season — freshman Robert Hodge for departed Craig Ochs — Brown has regained the form that carried Colorado to the Big 12 title last season.

"We have great respect for their team, for what they did last year and the way they're playing right now," Stoops said. "We recognize it as another big challenge." The Sooners (7-0, 3-0), who lead the Big 12 South, counter with the nation's second-ranked de-

fense, which allows 13.1 points and 252.2 yards a game.

Oklahoma has a fair running back of its own in Quentin Griffin, who averages 117.4 yards a game. In the Sooners' toughest game this season, Griffin came through with 248 yards and two touchdowns in a 35-24 win over Texas.

... OKLAHOMA, 28-14.

The picks:

No. 1 Miami (minus 39) at Rutgers: Don't watch. ... MIAMI, 52-0.

Pittsburgh (plus 13) at No. 3 Virginia Tech: Pitt can shackle Tech's untouchables — Suggs & Jones. ... PITTSBURGH, 24-21.

Boston College (plus 10) at No. 4 Notre Dame: Irish haven't forgotten '93 loss to BC ... NOTRE DAME, 31-17.

No. 5 Georgia (minus 2) vs. Florida (at Jacksonville, Fla.): Dawgs have rare chance to beat up on Gators. ... GEORGIA, 31-23.

No. 23 Minnesota (plus 12½) at No. 6 Ohio State: Gophers facing first Top 25 team this season. ... OHIO STATE, 37-14.

No. 7 Texas (minus 4) at Nebraska: 'Horns Brown only visiting coach since '91 to win in Lincoln. ... TEXAS, 31-21.

No. 16 Arizona State (plus 7½) at No. 8 Washington State: Cougs save QB Gesser from ASU's DE Suggs. ... WASHINGTON STATE, 34-30.

Wisconsin (plus 9) at No. 9 Iowa: Hawkeyes tough even without leading RB Russell. ... IOWA, 24-13.

College picks

Georgia Tech (plus 10) at No. 10 North Carolina State: Wolfpack shooting for 10-0 record. ... NC STATE, 34-21.

Vanderbilt (plus 22) at No. 12 Alabama: 'Bama best team in nation on probation. ... ALABAMA, 42-7.

No. 14 Kansas State (minus 31) at Kansas: Wildcats make it 10th straight over Jayhawks. ... KANSAS STATE, 45-7.

Michigan State (plus 15) at No. 15 Michigan: Spartans won last year with a second left. ... MICHIGAN, 28-20.

No. 18 Florida State (minus 10½) at Wake Forest: 'Noles bench QB Rix, hope to stay in Top 25. ... FLORIDA STATE, 31-17.

Stanford (plus 13) at No. 19 Oregon: In '01, Cardinal ended Ducks' home win streak at 23. ... OREGON, 35-20.

Illinois (plus 14) at No. 20 Penn State: Lions schedule takes an easy turn. ... PENN STATE, 35-14.

No. 21 Bowling Green (minus 18) at Kent State: Falcons have 10-game winning streak. ... BOWLING GREEN, 47-17.

Missouri (plus 10) at No. 22 Iowa State: Cyclones better not think this will be a breeze. ... IOWA STATE, 28-21.

No. 25 Tennessee (minus 1½) at South Carolina: Gamecocks out to end nine-game slide vs. Vols. ... SOUTH CAROLINA, 24-21.

Last week: 12-6 (straight); 6-11 (vs. points).
Season: 129-44 (straight); 85-77 (vs. points).

From The Associated Press

Kings 100, Trail Blazers 72

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The depth of the Sacramento Kings' roster never has been in much question. The size of Portland Trail Blazers' hearts probably will be debated all season.

Peja Stojakovic scored 26 points, and Bobby Jackson had 20 points and 10 rebounds as the Kings overcame the absence of three starters to beat Portland 100-72 Thursday night.

With just nine players in uniform, Sacramento cruised to a shockingly easy victory over the talented Blazers with no help from Chris Webber, Mike Bibby or Doug Christie — three starters from last season's Pacific Division championship team.

"They could have beat us tonight, but we did our best with the people we had," said Hedo Turkoglu, who scored 16 points. "When those guys come back, we'll be much better. We're just playing and learning what we have to do without them. We can't wait for them to come back."

NBA roundup

The Blazers beat the Lakers one night earlier, and it wasn't hard to imagine them charging through Sacramento the same way they defeated the Shaq-less champions. Instead, Portland heard a number of ear-searing lectures from coach Maurice Cheeks during an indifferent defensive effort.

The Kings' defense played a role as well, as it did in holding Cleveland to 67 points in Tuesday's opener.

"They made the same plays time and time again for layups," Cheeks said. "I made adjustments, but we just made the same bad plays time and time again. ... Our defense was atrocious."

Vlade Divac had 13 points, seven rebounds and six assists as the Kings demonstrated the depth of their roster in what should have been a difficult Western Conference matchup. Instead, six of the Kings' nine players in uniform had at least four field goals

apiece, and they led by 25 points in the third quarter.

"We play so well together, it's ridiculous," Jackson said.

"If three starters are out, we just fill those gaps with guys we have on hand."

Webber was held out after he turned up at the shootaround with strained lower abdominal muscles. Christie finished his two-game suspension for a preseason fight with Rick Fox, while Webber sat in street clothes with Bibby and Mateen Cleaves — both sidelined by foot injuries.

Rasheed Wallace scored 24 points for the Blazers, who never led and got frustrated in the second half. Cheeks lectured his players between the third and fourth quarters — shortly after Jackson drove the length of the court past all five Blazers for an uncontested layup in the final second.

The Kings expect to take Webber on

their four-game road trip, which begins Saturday in Memphis, but there's no telling when he'll play. Bibby is expected to be out until December, while no return date has been set for Cleaves.

Hawks 105, Jazz 98

ATLANTA — Glenn Robinson scored 30 points and Jason Terry added 21 points and 13 assists as Atlanta beat Utah in its home opener.

Robinson, who came to Atlanta in an offseason trade with Milwaukee, had 34 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists in his Hawks debut Wednesday night — a 104-95 loss at New Jersey.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim, who missed the opener with a sore back, scored 10 of Atlanta's points in a 15-6 run at the start of the third period for a 65-52 lead.

Karl Malone led Utah with 20 points. Terry's 13 assists matched a career high.

From The Associated Press

BASEBALL

NEW YORK — Jim Thome, the top hitter on the free-agent market, met with the Cleveland Indians, and two-time AL MVP Frank Thomas exercised his right to leave the Chicago White Sox.

Thomas was among 11 players who filed for free agency, raising the total to 130 among the approximately 180 who are eligible.

SAN FRANCISCO — Giants senior vice president and general manager Brian Sabean agreed in principle to a multi-year contract to remain with San Francisco.

CHICAGO — The Chicago Cubs declined their \$8.5 million option on Fred McGriff, making the first baseman eligible for free agency. He gets a \$500,000 buyout.

ST. LOUIS — Andy Benes was mulling his options after the St. Louis Cardinals declined a \$6 million option on his contract. The team wants to sign Benes, 35, but at a lower salary.

GOLF

ATLANTA — Vijay Singh hit a 5-wood within 8 inches of a hole-in-one on East Lake's tough finishing hole, giving him a 5-under 65 and a share of the lead with Steve Lowery after the Tour Championship first round.

Sports in brief

Tiger Woods had a 71, the first time in 21 rounds he has failed to break par dating to his 81 in the British Open third round.

MADISON, Miss. — Brad Elder was 2 over after three holes at the Southern Farm Bureau Classic but he finished with nine birdies in a 7-under 65 that gave him a one-stroke lead over eight players after the opening round.

ROME — Ian Poulter shot a career-best 11-under 61 and held a three-stroke lead after the Italian Open first round. Denmark's Anders Hansen and England's Mile Tunnick both shot 64 on the Ogiata Golf Club course.

BASKETBALL

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — NBA owners have approved an agreement with Charlotte for an expansion team that could begin play in a new arena in 2004-05. The Charlotte Observer reported.

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana Pacers signed guard Ron Artest and forward Jonathan Bender to contract extensions, among which they would have become restricted free agents after this season.

ORLANDO, Fla. — Orlando Magic forward Horace Grant could be out until

December because his left knee has not healed from arthroscopic surgery he had almost seven weeks ago.

AUTO RACING

FONTANA, Calif. — A week ago, Max Papis was strolling through the Winston Cup garage at Atlanta Motor Speedway, checking out job possibilities.

On Sunday, the 31-year-old Italian driver will be at the wheel of the No. 51 Lola-Honda, sitting in for injured Adrian Fernandez, in the 500 presented by Toyota at California Speedway.

HOCKEY

TORONTO — The winless Atlanta Thrashers benched star winger Ilya Kovalchuk because of poor defensive play.

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Minnesota Wild traded left wing Sylvain Blouin to the Montreal Canadiens for a seventh-round draft pick in 2003.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

GREENVILLE, S.C. — South Carolina

State running back Derek Watson will be reinstated to the team Friday after a hearing was delayed to determine whether his arrest on traffic violations a month ago put him in contempt of the sentence he received after he was convicted on a simple possession of marijuana charge in March.

HONOLULU — Fresno State Athletic Director Scott Johnson apologized for a fan throwing a screwdriver at the Hawaii bench last weekend.

TENNIS

MASPALOMAS, Canary Islands — Spain beat Austria 3-2 and Slovakia defeated Italy 3-1 to reach the Fed Cup final.

PARIS — Second-seeded Andre Agassi rallied to beat Australian Open champion Thomas Johansson 6-7 (2), 6-4, 6-3 to reach the Paris Masters quarterfinals. Carlos Moya, Andy Roddick and Lleyton Hewitt also won.

YACHTING

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Oracle edged series-leading Alinghi by four seconds, then returned in the afternoon to win an all-American duel with Stars & Stripes in the America's Cup challenger series.

From The Associated Press

NHL

Blackhawks 2, Kings 1

CHICAGO — Rookie Tyler Arnason is making a habit of providing late-game heroics for the Chicago Blackhawks.

Arnason scored with less than a minute to play for the second straight game, beating Felix Potvin with 35 seconds left in regulation to help Chicago beat Los Angeles 2-1 in overtime Thursday night.

Phil Housley scored 1:35 into the extra period to give Chicago its third victory in a row. Arnason scored the winner with 6.2 seconds left Tuesday night in a 3-2 victory over Columbus. On Sunday, He scored the go-ahead goal with 1:57 left in the second.

Arnason spoiled Potvin's shutout bid when he swatted in a loose puck from a scum in the crease. Chicago goalie Jocelyn Thibault was on the bench for a sixth attacker.

The Blackhawks hoped Arnason, a 23-year-old center, would perform well this season. With four goals and four assists, he's exceeding expectations.

"To be picked liked that and be on the ice late is an honor," Arnason said. "But I think the coach [Brian Sutter] is just going with whoever is hot."

Housley beat Potvin on a screened shot from the top of the slot.

"I just knew we were going to get something out of this game," Housley said. "We really came on in the third period. And I can't say enough about Kyle Calder being in front and screening the goalie."

Jaroslav Modry scored a power-play goal in the second period for the Kings.

Los Angeles, playing without injured forwards Jason Allison and Adam Deadmarsh, finished a five-game road trip at 2-1-1-1.

"I didn't worry once about Jason tonight," Kings coach Andy Murray said. "I was too busy. We tried to win the game."

Avalanche 5, Canucks 1

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Joe Sakic scored twice as Colorado beat Vancouver.

Dan Hinote, Adam Foote and Rob Blake also scored for the Avalanche, who won for just the second time in six games, but have points in all but one game. Patrick Roy stopped 23 shots.

Rookie defenseman Bryan Allen scored for the Canucks, who only have one victory in the past nine games and seven games on home ice all season.

Mighty Ducks 4, Bruins 1

BOSTON — Paul Kariya scored three goals and set up the other as Anaheim beat Boston, halting the Bruins' eight-game unbeaten streak in front of their smallest FleetCenter crowd ever.

The announced attendance was 9,491, the fewest on a non-snowstorm night since Oct. 14, 1982. The Bruins had two crowds under 8,000; one in 1987 and the other 1984. But both were played on what the team called "blizzard" days.

Anaheim posted just its third victory in 11 games and spoiled Boston's attempt to equal its best start in club history. The Bruins captured 16 points three times prior in their initial 10 games, the last coming in 1979.

Flyers 6, Coyotes 2

PHILADELPHIA — Michael Handzus and Kim Johnsson scored 2:05 apart in the second period, leading Philadelphia over Phoenix.

The Flyers are 7-1-2 under new coach Ken Hitchcock, and extended their unbeaten streak at home to five games (4-0-1). Phoenix has lost four of five.

Eric Desjardins, Mark Recchi, Dennis Seidenberg and Jeremy Roenick also scored for Philadelphia. Branko Radivojevic and Shane Doan had the Coyotes' goals.

Leafs 3, Thrashers 3 (OT)

TORONTO — Backup goalie Pasi Nurminen made 32 saves as winless Atlanta avoided its 10th straight loss by tying Toronto.

Patrik Stefan scored the tying goal at 15:26 of the third period for Thrashers (0-8-1-1), who are in the throes of a 19-game winless streak dating back to March 23.

To shake things up, Atlanta coach Curt Fraser benched star winger Ilya Kovalchuk because of poor defensive play and started Nurminen instead of a struggling Milan Hnilek.

Flames 3, Sabres 0

CALGARY, Alberta — Roman Turek made 30 saves and Jarome Iginla had a goal and an assist to lead Calgary over Buffalo for its first home victory of the season.

Toni Lydman also had a goal and an assist as the Flames won for the first time in six home games.

From The Associated Press

Standings/scores

NHL Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division						
	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF
Philadelphia	7	1	2	0	16	40
Pittsburgh	6	2	2	0	14	35
New Jersey	6	2	0	0	12	19
N.Y. Rangers	4	6	2	0	10	28
N.Y. Islanders	3	6	1	0	7	26
Northeast Division						
	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF
Boston	6	2	2	0	14	34
Montreal	3	3	3	0	9	24
Buffalo	3	5	2	0	8	23
Toronto	3	6	2	0	8	35
Ottawa	3	4	1	0	7	16
Southeast Division						
	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF
Tampa Bay	7	1	2	0	16	39
Carolina	5	4	1	1	12	26
Florida	4	5	1	1	10	26
Washington	4	5	1	0	9	21
Atlanta	0	8	1	1	2	27

Western Conference

Central Division						
	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF
St. Louis	6	1	1	0	13	32
Detroit	6	3	1	0	13	37
Chicago	5	3	1	0	11	23
Columbus	3	5	1	0	7	24
Nashville	1	5	1	2	5	18
Northwest Division						
	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF
Minnesota	8	1	2	0	18	38
Colorado	4	1	3	2	13	27
Calgary	3	3	2	2	10	27
Vancouver	3	4	4	0	10	27
Edmonton	2	4	2	1	7	22
Pacific Division						
	W	L	T	OL	Pts	GF
Dallas	6	2	2	1	15	35
Los Angeles	5	2	2	1	13	29
Phoenix	4	7	0	1	9	26
Anaheim	3	5	3	0	9	28
San Jose	3	6	0	1	7	25

Two points for a win, one point for a tie and overtime loss.

Thursday's games

Anaheim 4, Boston 1
Atlanta 3, Toronto 3, tie
Philadelphia 6, Phoenix 2
Minnesota 2, San Jose 1, OT
Chicago 2, Los Angeles 1, OT
Calgary 3, Buffalo 0
Colorado 5, Vancouver 1

NBA Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
Orlando	2	0	1.000
New Jersey	1	0	1.000
Philadelphia	1	1	.500
Washington	1	1	.500
Miami	0	1	.000
New York	0	1	.000
Boston	0	2	.000
Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
Chicago	1	0	1.000
Detroit	1	0	1.000
Indiana	1	0	1.000
New Orleans	1	0	1.000
Toronto	1	0	1.000
Atlanta	1	1	.500
Cleveland	1	1	.500
Milwaukee	0	1	.000

Western Conference

Midwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Dallas	1	0	1.000
Minnesota	1	0	1.000
San Antonio	1	1	.500
Denver	0	1	.000
Houston	0	1	.000
Memphis	0	1	.000
Utah	0	2	.000
Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
Sacramento	2	0	1.000
Golden State	1	0	1.000
Seattle	1	0	1.000
Portland	1	1	.500
L.A. Clippers	0	1	.000
Phoenix	0	1	.000
L.A. Lakers	0	2	.000

Thursday's games

Atlanta 105, Utah 98
Washington 114, Boston 69
Sacramento 100, Portland 72

Friday's games

Indiana at New Jersey
Orlando at Minnesota
Memphis at Detroit
New York at Philadelphia
Toronto at San Antonio
New Orleans at Chicago
Houston at Denver
Cleveland at Phoenix
Seattle at Golden State
L.A. Lakers at L.A. Clippers

From The Associated Press

Vick fined \$5,000 for sagging socks

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick was fined \$5,000 this week by the NFL. His offense: wearing red socks in Sunday's game against the New Orleans Saints.

The league said Wednesday that the former Virginia Tech star violated its uniform dress code. Wide receiver Shawn Jefferson also was fined \$5,000 — for shoddy shoes.

Such fines are common, with violations ranging from untucked jerseys to unlicensed apparel. Players learn on Wednesdays from the NFL office in New York, via courier.

Vick was fined because his white undersocks were rolled down, exposing red undersocks from ankle to knee. NFL guidelines say the exterior sock must be white at least to the mid-lower leg.

Jefferson was guilty of wearing the wrong color shoes. Teams must designate their color before the season, and the Falcons chose white. Jefferson has been wearing black shoes covered with white tape.

Cowboys Ellis to miss Detroit game

IRVING, Texas — Dallas Cowboys starting defensive end Greg Ellis will miss the Detroit game because of a concussion he suffered two weeks ago against Arizona.

The Cowboys listed Ellis on their Web site injury report as being out a week with post-concussion syndrome.

Ellis didn't seek treatment after the Arizona game and played against Seattle. He experienced headaches, dizziness, nausea and some memory blackout in that game, according to The Dallas Morning News' on-line edition Thursday night.

"I do feel better than I did yesterday, but I'm still experiencing some of the headaches," Ellis said. The Cowboys have a bye Nov. 10, which will give Ellis another week to recover.

NFL briefs

Ellis leads the team with 5.5 sacks.

WR Jackson signs with Redskins

ASHBURN, Va. — Willie Jackson signed with the Washington Redskins on Thursday, giving coach Steve Spurrier another ex-University of Florida receiver.

Jackson was waived by Atlanta on Monday after he complained he wasn't getting the ball enough. Jackson was the Falcons' third-leading receiver, with 18 catches for 199 yards.

"We certainly try to get players we know something about," Spurrier said.

Jackson arrived at Redskins Park at 1 p.m., signed his contract and was on the field in time for the 2 p.m. practice. Players greeted him with "New guy, new guy" when they formed a huddle at the start of the workout.

To make room for Jackson, the Redskins released receiver Kevin Lockett. Lockett took a pay cut to stay with the team this season and started two games, but he had not played since a costly fumble at Green Bay two weeks ago.

The Redskins were interested in Jackson during the offseason when he was a free agent, but he signed a three-year, \$3.5 million contract with the Falcons. The 10-year veteran has also played with Dallas, Jacksonville, Cincinnati and New Orleans.

Jackson set career highs with 81 receptions and 1,046 yards last year with the Saints. He also made 28 catches on third downs, second-best in the NFC. That's a better season by far than any of the other Redskins receivers have had.

Steelers' Burress fined \$5,000

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Plaxico Burress was fined \$5,000 Thursday by the NFL for an on-field tantrum caused when the Ravens' James Trapp yanked off his helmet Sunday.

The fine was automatic because Burress was ejected. Burress had caught two touchdown passes when he was tossed late in the first half of the Steelers' 31-18 victory.

The fight started when Steelers receiver Antwaan Randle El sent Ravens cornerback Trapp out of bounds after Trapp intercepted Tommy Maddox's pass. Trapp got up angrily, and several players exchanged words. Trapp jumped on Burress and pulled off his helmet, resulting in Trapp's ejection.

Shortly after that, Burress ran to the defense of Steelers receiver Hines Ward, who was surrounded by several Ravens following an altercation with linebacker Edgerton Hartwell.

Ward plans to give Burress a \$2,500 gift to cover half the fine.

NFL rules prohibit players from paying fines for teammates.

QB Miller back for Bears

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — Jim Miller is ready to return as the Chicago Bears' starting quarterback.

Miller, who hasn't started the past two weeks because of a sore shoulder and elbow, practiced for a second straight day. He declined to comment Thursday.

"Jimmy threw again and did fine, I think, and we'll see how he feels again tomorrow, but we anticipate he'll be the guy on Sunday," coach Dick Jauron said.

Chris Chandler has been replacing him as the starter for Chicago, which has lost five straight games.

From The Associated Press